



No. CCCCLIV.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18, 1851.

THE "Amazon" has put on her bonnet and shawl, the crystal fountain and the organs have given over playing (things now looking serious), the visitors from north, south, east, and west have gone home, and the policemen have left off counting. There is no longer a difficulty in getting a place in an omnibus: the guests are fled, the garlands dead, and Knightsbridge is a deserted village, waiting for another Goldsmith to sing its beauties. Batty comes to a close, and Boyer is brought to it: eating-houses for the nonce must look out for some other occupation, and people who are compelled to stop in London must find some other means of spending their Friday and Saturday. Few who were present on the 11th, when the Great Exhibition was closed to the public, will forget it. Fifty thousand persons inside took off their hats and sang "God save the Queen," and those who were outside did so too, and then they gave three mighty cheers, and then three more, and then the bells rang horribly, and then the thing was over. Up to the last moment, as it has been from the beginning, the arrangements were good, and the multitude dispersed without even a mishap. On Monday and Tuesday in this week the building was opened to exhibitors, jurors, and their friends, and on Wednesday Prince Albert and the Royal Commissioners assembled on a platform in the centre of the transept, and received a report from Lord Canning on behalf of the juries: Prince Albert replied, the Bishop of London prayed, and the Hallelujah Chorus, finely sung, ended the proceedings. Lord Canning's report described the constitution of the thirty juries, and explained that the Council of Chairmen had advised that one of the three medals originally proposed should be withdrawn, because of the determination to avoid denoting different degrees of success amongst exhibitors in the same branch of production.

The report continued:—

"Of the remaining two, they suggested that one, the Prize Medal, should be conferred wherever a certain standard of excellence in production or workmanship had been attained—utility, beauty, fitness, adaptation to particular markets, and other elements of merit being taken into consideration, according to the nature of the object; and they recommended that this medal should be awarded by the juries, subject to confirmation by the groups."

In regard to the other and larger medal, they suggested that the conditions of its award should be some important novelty of invention or application, either in material or process of manufacture, or originality combined with great beauty of design; that it should not be conferred for excellence of production or workmanship alone, however eminent; and they further suggested that this medal should be awarded by the Council of Chairmen, upon the recommendation of a jury, supported by its group."

"It was to be expected that cases would arise in which the Council Medal, as the higher reward, should be asked for exhibitors whose claims were only somewhat stronger in degree, without differing from those of others to whom the Prize Medal had been awarded. In such cases it became the duty of the Council of Chairmen to refuse their assent to the award of the Council Medal; with-

out, however, necessarily impugning the alleged superiority of the article for which it was demanded. On the other hand, some instances have occurred in which they have felt themselves called upon to confirm the claim to a Council Medal where the object for which it was claimed shewed, in itself, less merit of execution and manufacture than others of its class. It follows, therefore, that the award of a Council Medal does not necessarily stamp its recipient as a better manufacturer or producer than others who have received the Prize Medal. It is rather a mark of such invention, ingenuity, or originality as may be expected to exercise an influence upon industry more extended, and more important, than could be produced by mere excellence of manufacture."

The number of Prize Medals awarded is 2,918. The number of Council Medals 170. The number of exhibitors, 17,000; so that two out of every eleven exhibitors have medals: of others honourable mention is made. The duties of the jurors involved an examination of at least a million of articles;—the labour and the responsibility were both enormous. For the most part, as we have reason to know, the duties have been performed with great care and ability: mistakes have been made, and some individuals will have great cause for complaint; but on this point we need not speak now.

Prince Albert, in his reply, shewed that the difficulty of the task discharged by the jurors was rightly appreciated.

"It would perhaps have been more interesting to the public," said the Prince, "had the Commissioners instructed the juries to follow the practice which has usually prevailed in the Exhibitions of individual nations, and to grant medals of different degrees, to mark the gradations of excellence among the exhibitors; but they feel that they have adopted the safer course, and that which was upon the whole most in accordance with the feelings of the majority of the exhibitors, in directing that no distinction should be made between their merits. If their productions came up to the standard requisite to entitle them to a prize, but that all should without exception take the same rank and receive the same medal."

The Commissioners, however, considered it right to place at the disposal of the Council of Chairmen a peculiar or "council" medal in the cases to which your lordship has referred. Important discoveries in many branches of science and of manufactures have in this Exhibition been brought under the notice of the public; and it seems just that those who have rendered services of this kind to the world should receive a special mark of acknowledgment on an occasion which has rendered so conspicuous the advantages which the many have derived from the discoveries of the few.

The grant of the Council Medal for beauty of design, and for excellence in the fine arts, as applied to manufactures, though made upon a somewhat different principle, is also compatible with the views of the Commissioners, since in the cases in which it has been given it does not mark any greater comparative excellence of manufacture, or assign to one producer a higher place than is accorded to others, but is to be regarded as a testimony to the genius which can clothe the articles required for the use of daily life with beauty that can please the eye, and instruct and elevate the mind. Valuable as this Exhibition has proved in many respects, it appears to the Commissioners that there is no direction in which its effects will be more sensibly and immediately perceived than in the improvement which it may be expected to produce in taste, and the impulse it has given to the arts of design; and a special acknowledgment is justly due to those who have afforded the best examples of art, whether pure or applied, and led the way in this interesting career of improvement."

The reports vary much in length and importance: together, however, they will probably occupy 3,000 printed pages, and will form the most authentic and valuable history of the collection.

The statistics of this undertaking will startle our children more than they have surprised us; we shall ourselves, too, by-and-by read with wonder of 110,000 persons having visited it on the 7th of October, and that 3,000—4,000—5,234, were taken in a day.

After payment of all expenses the surplus

will probably amount to a quarter of a million sterling. The appropriation of this is yet unsettled, and will probably require an Act of Parliament. It will be matter for regret if this be put away till wanted for a similar undertaking hereafter. It should be invested, and the interest applied forthwith to the advancement of the arts which elevate industry: a museum of industrial art should be obtained, and we should be glad to see a sum applied annually in the education of designers,—a reward for application and ability.* It is said that a committee has been appointed to select from the Exhibition, for purchase, works of design for study, but we are not aware under what arrangements.

That the building will be taken down seems now nearly certain, and, however much we may regret it in a practical point of view, it is impossible to avoid the conviction that so far as the reputation of the event is concerned, it is much better that it should end in its brilliancy than leave a ruin for a record. To mark the site in a manner appropriate to the place, we would suggest that the whole outline should be planted with fitting trees and the awarded area within be ever kept clear; there will be time enough, however, to discuss this, and so, too, there will be time to point out measures for improvement, which the Exhibition has shown to be necessary. For ourselves we feel that it has too rapidly passed away. The oftener it was seen the more difficult it seemed to grasp it. Truly, as an eloquent writer says, an "Amazing spectacle! Touchstones of character! capacity! and knowledge! Spectacle now lost in the spectators; then spectators in the spectacle! Rich, poor, gentle, simple, wise, foolish, young, old, learned, ignorant, thoughtful, thoughtless, haughty, humble, frivolous, profound! Every grade of intellect: every shade of character! Here is a voluble smatterer, suddenly discomfited by the chance question of a curious child, and rather than own ignorance, will tell him falsely. There is a bustling piece of earth: of the earth, earthy: testing everything by money value. Here comes one serenely unconscious he is a fool: and there is one suddenly startled by a suspicion that he knows scarcely anything." Wholesome impression; it may lead to good.

The quotation we have made is from Mr. Warren's apologue, "The Lily and the Bee," which contains much that is beautiful, excellent, and suggestive, though disguised by the form of communication which has been adopted.† "In the south transept," says the

* Amongst our correspondents on the appropriation of this fund, one writes as follows:—"A few more days and this westward springtide will have passed away. This huge oration to man's knowledge and his power over material will have been performed. With a glorious wide-extending blaze it has sent forth its light to many a distant shore. Shall it, like a funeral pyre, so fade away and leave no trace, no sign, to tell of its grandeur to another age? No! it shall leave the dusty chronicles of old newspapers, loading the catacombs of the museum libraries of a future race? Is there no hope that the appeal, the heart-wash of those who are the hidden mechanism of this pretty dial-face, will be heard—the sooty stalwart iron-crusher of Birmingham, the meagre embroiderer of London? Can we not help our cry till it winds its way even to the penetralia of courts and commissions? The receipt of two days would be ample to build and endow forty homes—homes sacred to the rest of the honest workman whose life has been roughly passed in ill-rewarded labour. This tardy touch of ease would be the prize to hope for, and spare us many a bitter plaint of cruel injustice with which so many dying lips have to upbraid their fellow-men. Shall charity have no title of the immense boon? It will raise a cry against us among the nations if from so many thousands we set not aside a few to assuage the ill they labour under—they to whom we owe that pleasure and that pride which we rightly feel as men, in seeing what incalculable power there is in human will and human reason to subdue to its most delicate and complex service, nature's wildest agents."

† "The Lily and the Bee, an Apologue of the Crystal Palace." By Samuel Warren, F.R.S., Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh and London.